

1500 had been baptized. The converts were all Chinese except a few Mongols, and none of them were Mohammedans. No Tibetans had been converted, but he had not had much opportunity of going among them. Père Schram had twenty-nine schools, which, as Pereira remarks, was more than enough for one man.

Catholic communities were established by Père Lefebre the Jesuit in the 17th century—though there may have been earlier ones. Missionaries disguised as petty merchants used to visit them from Sian-fu in Shensi. The Christians were mostly people exiled to Kansu for their faith. These communities continued to flourish, chiefly near Liang-chow-fu and Kanchow-fu. And when the present Belgian-Dutch Mission was established about 1871 they found about four hundred of these old Christians.

On April 17 Pereira left Sining for Tangar, his real starting-point for the journey to Lhasa, and reached it on the following day. The day was beautiful and the road lay up the fertile valley of the Sining Ho, which is over 2 miles wide and lies between sandy treeless hills from 500 to 700 feet high and covered with scanty grass. The cart road was fairly good in fine weather, except in parts where it is sunken and flooded with water from the irrigated fields. The Sining River is crossed by a bridge or forded by carts at Cha-ma-Lung. Beyond this the road is stony and leads up a defile with the Sining River on the left. But on approaching Sining the country is more open. There are rolling downs and away to the south a high range partly covered with snow.